

E. Access and Transportation

Access to Fire Island will continue by traditional transportation modes. Private vehicular access (except by property owners with permits) will be limited to parking areas at Robert Moses State Park on the west end of the island and Smith Point County Park at the east end of the national seashore (see table 5) to maintain Fire Island's roadless character.

Visitor access to National Park Service facilities at the Sunken Forest, Talisman, and Watch Hill will be by means of an upgraded ferry system, by small boat, or on foot. (Ferry service to Talisman will be provided on a phased basis and will not occur until federal facilities are established.) Visitors to the lighthouse area and Smith Point West will enter these areas on foot from adjacent state and county parking areas. (See table 6 for areas that are accessible by water and suggested maximum numbers of visitors.)

The major ferry routes to federal areas will originate from a proposed ferry terminal on the Patchogue River and from the existing private ferry operation in Sayville (see figure 12). The National Park Service will continue to analyze the feasibility of establishing a secondary ferry terminal adjacent to or within Heckscher State Park. The future development of the Heckscher ferry terminal is dependent upon New York State's willingness to transfer the property to the National Park Service, and upon detailed, site-specific environmental analyses, including the impacts of dredging. If the Heckscher terminal becomes operational, it will provide service to Sunken Forest and the existing ferry service to federal areas from Sayville will be discontinued. Service to Watch Hill and Talisman will originate from Patchogue.

The National Park Service proposes the establishment of a mainland national seashore headquarters and ferry terminal on a 10-acre site at the head of the Patchogue River in Patchogue, New York. The site is bounded by the Patchogue River, Division Street, and West Avenue. The headquarters and terminal facility will contain facilities for administration, visitor orientation, a small concession facility, ferry terminal, maintenance and storage area, wet and dry docks, visitor parking, and bicycle storage (see figures 10 and 11).

1. Ferry Service

Establish service from Patchogue to Talisman (maximum of two boats per day).

Expand ferry service from Patchogue to Watch Hill to accommodate 970 passengers per day.

Pursue the feasibility of developing a secondary ferry terminal adjacent to or within Heckscher State Park that would eventually replace the Sayville terminal.

Develop a mainland ferry terminal site and headquarters facility in Patchogue.

2. Aircraft

Prohibit public use of seaplanes and helicopters on seashore lands.

Work with the Federal Aviation Administration and exempted communities to limit the use of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to well-marked landing areas, and develop regulations to govern the use of seaplanes in waters adjoining the communities, restricting use to specific areas in order to minimize safety hazards.

Limit federal use of helicopters to essential management and emergency uses, with designated landing areas near Sunken Forest and Watch Hill.

F. Land-Use Controls

The prohibition of additional private land development within the 17 communities of Fire Island was not intended by the national seashore enabling legislation; however, new development was to be consistent with the conservation and preservation of the barrier island resource. Development was to conform with the traditional low-density residential character of the communities prior to the establishment of the national seashore. Since the seashore was established, widespread controversy has developed regarding the degree of control of private land development, permissible uses, variances, and responsibility for control. The following proposals clarify existing control problems and establish the manner in which future use and development will occur.

1. Promulgation of Model Zoning Ordinance

Develop standards and criteria, in cooperation with local governments and island residents, for a model zoning ordinance that will be applied to permissible development in the 17 exempted communities. (The model ordinance will comprise the basis of a special Fire Island district to be included in the zoning ordinances of the towns of Islip and Brookhaven.)